

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

BY MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XXII.

A WEEK had gone by, and it was Saturday evening again.

Netta Heard had gone home that day, a poor little white ghost of her former self, but trying hard to smile, as she thanked Phoebe and Matty for their kindness to her. Matty had shaken her head, and answered in her most severe tone, "Do not thank me, Netta; if anything I could—could do——" And then she had broken off abruptly, and turning sharply on Phoebe, had enquired what she was such a goose as to cry for. Phoebe was not crying, and looked mildly astonished at the accusation, but Matty made a dash at Netta, hugged and kissed her vehemently, and then rushed from the room muttering incoherently something about attending to the bread in the oven. When she reached the kitchen, however, her movements were by no means conducive to the safety of the bread. She opened and shut the oven door violently once or twice, examined an empty bread-bin for at least a minute with apparently intense interest, shook a little pepper from the pepper-pot into the milk-jug, finally carefully washed and wiped a perfectly clean dinner-plate, which she took from the rack for the purpose, and then gave way altogether, and with a choking sob sat down by the kitchen-dresser and indulged in the luxury of a good cry.

Matty was still crying bitterly when the front-door bell rang, and was so absorbed in her grief that she did not hear it, and it remained unanswered, for Ann was out, and Phoebe was putting Bunyan to bed. It did not ring again. The caller went round the house and entered the kitchen by the back-door. It was Dick, the un-

lucky immediate cause of the domestic tempest which had clouded the horizon of the Carfield family.

Dick stood still in amazement and dismay on the threshold of the back-door. Could that be Matty—the indomitable, sharp-tongued, quick-handed Matty, transformed into a very Niobe, her tall, graceful form shaken with sobs, her lovely brown eyes streaming with tears, which she did not even take the trouble to wipe away? He was horror-stricken, and was almost inclined to steal away as he had come, without letting anyone know of his presence. He would have done so, no doubt, but that, as he looked, an uncontrollable desire came over him to try if he could not comfort the weeping girl. He could not bear to go away from the house and leave her grieving so, crying her heart out in solitude. He felt really shocked, too, and could not help thinking that some new calamity had befallen the Carfields, since Matty was in tears. Tears mean so much when shed by those who very rarely give way to them.

So Dick entered the kitchen, making a little clatter as he did so, and causing Matty to look up with a start and an exclamation of astonishment.

"I beg your pardon," said he very humbly, feeling rather frightened now that he had cut off from himself all possibility of retreat.

Matty could be very awe-inspiring when she was angry, and she was very angry now. She might have forgiven Dick for the very small share he had had in the family fracas, but at that moment she felt as though she never could forgive him for having discovered her in the undignified position of weeping bitterly over a damp kitchen-towel. She tried hard to be extra dignified now to make up, and began:

"May I know the reason of this intrusion, Mr. Saunders?" but she could not keep up the quiet tone of grave remonstrance, and began to cry again, exclaiming between her sobs: "It is too—too bad of you. You, who are not anything to anybody, just when we were getting to be happy, coming and upsetting us all; and, as if you had not done enough, you must needs come and insult me by interfering and meddling, so that I cannot even have a good cry in my own kitchen without being interrupted by your coming to triumph over me."

Matty buried her face in her towel, and cried more pathetically than ever. The fact was that she was unstrung with the excitement and extra work she had gone through in the past week, and her tears were more than half hysterical; and, moreover, she was excessively annoyed with herself for giving way to them at all.

Dick could not stand it any longer. He came forward and touched her shoulder.

"Miss Matty!"

"Do go away!" sobbed Matty.

"I will in a minute, only please just listen to me first. I don't triumph—really I don't."

"Yes, you do—you know you do."

"No, indeed. I'm miserable; I hate myself!"

"Nonsense!"

But there was a softer tone in Matty's voice, and Dick was emboldened to proceed:

"I am so ashamed of myself. I do not know what to do. I came round this evening on purpose to beg pardon. No one answered the bell, so I came to this door to see if I could find anyone here to leave a message with. Do forgive me, Miss Matty."

"I don't know why you should ask me to forgive you," said Matty sternly, sitting up and fumbling for her pocket-handkerchief.

"Perhaps not; but I must be forgiven by someone, you know, and I cannot bother Miss Carfield, and I did speak to Luke."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He looked at me in a sort of vacant way, as though he did not see me, and said, 'Forgive you, my dear fellow! Why, you did not do anything.' You really must forgive me, Miss Matty. You do not know how unhappy I am. I am so wretched that it is a comfort to know that they are so angry with me down at the Holme."

"Are they angry?"

"Yes, very. My cousin Gordon talked to me for ever so long about the necessity of being more thoughtful and less boyish. He was angry—and, mind you, when Gordon does lose his temper he does it thoroughly. Quite right, too. I have not seen him angry before, and I respect him all the more for it. Clarence, even, looks coldly at me when she can remember that I am under punishment, which is not often, bless her!"

Dick finished with a break in his voice which was very boyish indeed, and very touching. Nothing more was needed to enlist Matty's heart—always a very tender one—on his side.

"They are abominably unjust!" said she vehemently.

"Thank you. Then you will forgive me, will you not?"

"Why, yes, of course. But Luke is right; there really is nothing to forgive. I do not think it was your fault a bit. Daniel was sure to make a disturbance some day. Only—oh, dear me!—to think of that poor boy wandering about with no one to take care of him, and no money, and half-heartbroken, too. It is too dreadful!"

Matty's eyes filled with tears again. Dick looked at her with a new interest. He had not supposed her capable of so much feeling. He had, like many other people, judged her to be rather hard.

Matty had only herself to blame for that, since she habitually tried to appear so.

Dick had admired her when he saw her before; now he felt that he liked and respected her.

"I would not fret too much about your brother, if I were you, Miss Matty," said he gently. "I am sure he is really a clever fellow, only he wanted rousing from all his day-dreams. Perhaps this trouble was just what was needed to make a man of him, and he will come home presently so improved you will hardly know him. You all made too much of him at home here. He will learn independence out in the world."

"I never made too much of him," said Matty sadly. "I snubbed him and scolded him. Oh dear! I wish I had been more patient with him. It is so dreadful that he may, perhaps, not come back, and I shall never have a chance to let him see that I really do love him."

"Yes, it is dreadful," said Dick quietly, and was silent for a minute.

Matty liked that. If he had tried to make her feel that she was quite right in her treatment of Daniel she would have despised him.

Presently he went on speaking :

"I do not see, though, Miss Matty, why you should imagine that your brother will not come back. He is much older than I was when I was cast adrift. Do you know that from the time I was six years old until I came to my cousin, I never had a home. I really was nothing to anybody, Miss Matty, even though I lived with my father."

"Oh, don't! I am so sorry. No, I did not know," said Matty earnestly, "or I would never have said such a heartless thing. Indeed I did not mean it; but I was so tired and cross."

"I quite understand. But you will not be despondent any more, will you? Depend upon it your brother will come home again."

"Perhaps," said Matty doubtfully. "But meantime—well, it is just breaking my mother's heart. You know she is never strong, and now she sits all day by the fire and will not speak to anyone. She does not even cry or scold me as she usually does. Only sometimes she goes up into Dan's room and looks at the bed, as though she half thought he were staying in bed to breakfast, as he used to do, you know, sometimes. Then there is poor Netta gone home so white and ill, and something has happened to Phoebe; she always was thoughtful, but now she is very sad too. I see it, though she tries to be cheerful. Luke goes about like an embodiment of the question 'Is life worth living?' and Clarence has not been to see us for a week."

Dick gave a nod of comprehension, and then a half-surprised whistle, as though some new light had suddenly illumined his inner consciousness. He leant up against the doorpost, looking very serious for a minute or two.

Then he turned round and said :

"So that was why you came down here and had a good cry in your own kitchen, was it?"

"You may laugh, if you please," said Matty indignantly. "You would have cried too, if you had been in my place."

"I am sure I should," said Dick, with rather unnecessary earnestness. "I would not laugh for anything; I am far too sorry. Look here—did it occur to you to put those last two things together?"

"Which two?"

"Why, Clarence's absence and Luke's——"

"Why, no. Do you think—— Oh, that would be nice."

"Well, listen. Don't you tell; but I am pretty sure this is it. Those two were just as fond of each other as they could be. Oh, I'd been watching them ever since I came! They were going on just as nicely as possible until last Saturday, and then I verily believe that duffer of a Dan said something to Clarence about Luke; that made her shy, you see, and now she won't have anything to say to him. So he is moping himself to death thinking she does not care for him, and she is fretting her heart out for fear he should have found out that she does care, and should not reciprocate her affection. Oh, it is clear as possible!"

"I shall begin to believe in your being a poet soon!" exclaimed Matty. "How did you find it all out?"

"So you did not believe before?" said Dick, laughing.

"Well," said Matty apologetically, "Peter said so, so I was bound to believe it; but——"

"You did not think I was cut out for one? Well, you were right, Miss Matty. I am not a poet. I have only just got so far as knowing what good poetry is. But will you help to bring our little love-idyll to a successful termination?"

"No, indeed; not I. I am far too clumsy to meddle with such delicate affairs; I should be sure to do harm. You must manage it yourself."

"Well, may I report progress?"

"Yes," said Matty; but then, contradicting herself: "Oh no; why, who would have thought that I should have turned out a matchmaker? No; I will have nothing to do with it."

"Miss Matty, depend upon it," said Dick, "the match is already to all intents and purposes made. I shall only manoeuvre to give them an opportunity of expressing their feelings to each other, and I shall come and report progress. Good-night."

He was gone, and Matty went upstairs to Phoebe in the nursery.

"Phoebe," said she, "I am a conspirator."

"What do you mean, dear?"

"Just that. Do you mind my having a secret from you, Phoebe?"

"Why, no, dear; I suppose you'll tell me some time?"

"Certainly; but for the present I am a conspirator—an arch-conspirator—and I am going to bed to think about my plots. So good-night, Phoebe."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

I ALWAYS thought it a very remarkable thing that a man whom very few of his fellows understood or appreciated in the least, who was spoken of by those who had had business transactions with him as a very shrewd and hard though perfectly honest trader, and by those who had no knowledge of him as unscrupulous and miserly—I always thought it remarkable, I say, that such a man as this should have gained the complete affection, trust, and respect of three women, each so noble in her own way, as Phoebe Carfield, Clarence Fenchurch, and Deborah Leighton.

Yet so it was with Gordon Fenchurch. His sister's love had been his from the time when they were babies together. Phoebe Carfield's love he had sought and won, not in words—the time was not yet quite ripe for that. Had it been, had Gordon spoken his heart's feelings to Phoebe at the end of that long and happy summer, this story had never been written.

As for the third woman who loved Gordon, she loved because she could not help it; because her true-sighted soul saw the beauty and self-sacrifice of the life that was being lived out so near to hers, and yet so far beyond her reach—thrust far beyond her reach by her own act. Had she chosen to desert her own walk in life she might have attained to his, and had her chance with more favoured members of her sex of treading it by his side. Now she was without chance or hope of his companionship, and yet she loved him—would have laid down her life for him. She worshipped him from afar off, and found great comfort in the thought that he did not class her with the rest of his hands as merely a good weaver, but recognised her individuality, discerned her genius, and comprehended and admired her motives for not giving herself up to its claims.

She was of a naturally reticent nature, and very self-dependent, as many fine characters are. Not to her dearest friend would she have given a hint of her love for Gordon, though to herself she did not scruple to admit it fully, feeling no loss of self-respect in so doing. Why should she feel such a loss? It seemed to her the most beautiful and noble sensation of her life. Had she been placed by circum-

stances nearer to him, had there seemed to her to be any chance of her love's achieving the natural termination of woman's love for man, marriage—she might have felt shame in loving one who had no thought of her.

As matters were, Gordon was as far above Deborah as the sun, and she felt as free to admire and love him as she was to admire and love the sunshine.

Just now it happened that she enjoyed a little more of her sunshine than she had done hitherto. She began to see Gordon every Sunday.

This was the manner of its happening.

Dick's errand to Mr. Franks had not been without its fruit. The reverend gentleman called upon the young author at an early date. It came about that when he made his call at about eight o'clock in the evening, Gordon and Clarence were both disengaged, but Dick was busied in one of his wildest fits of writing. He had been at work since six in the morning, had eaten his meals as he wrote, and now when Clarence came to summon him to see his guest, would only growl out, "Presently."

Gordon was at first much annoyed. He had conceived a strong dislike for the whole race of parsons, and hated the notion of being forced to entertain one even for a quarter of an hour.

His natural politeness, however, led him to welcome Mr. Franks with sufficient cordiality to set him at his ease, and presently, to his surprise, he found himself talking to his visitor as though the latter were no parson at all.

Indeed, it was hardly in human nature to resist the genial and sympathetic kind-heartedness that prompted every word which Mr. Franks spoke. He possessed infinite tact—another word for unselfishness—and Gordon never suspected that he was being carefully studied by the kindly, sensible, apparently matter-of-fact man who had called to see his cousin.

When Dick came downstairs at last, with pale face, tousled hair, and inky fingers, he found Mr. Franks with a pipe in his mouth, and his feet within the fender, hotly arguing some question of politics with Gordon, bringing his superior learning to bear against the ready judgment and shrewd wit of the Lancashire merchant.

They took hardly any notice of Dick, who was, apparently, quite willing to be ignored, and drew a chair near to Clarence's where she sat listening eagerly to the war of words.

The conversation drifted on to other



subjects presently. Mr. Franks mentioned some book that was being much talked of—Carlyle's *Reminiscences*.

"I have not read it," said Gordon a little abruptly.

"Have you not?" said Mr. Franks. "I am surprised to hear that. I should have supposed that Carlyle would have been one of your heroes."

"I know nothing about him. I know very little about books at all, Mr. Franks. You will soon discover that I am nothing but an ill-educated, or rather uneducated business-man."

"Ah, well, but you should read Carlyle, you know, all the same, and if you will allow me to say so, other books too. I cannot see any reason why a business-man should not keep himself up in the current literature of the day, however impossible it may be for him to enter upon any deeper study. I am a great believer in the wholesome influence of books."

"So was not my father," remarked Dick.

"How came you to be literary then?" asked Gordon.

"Natural perversity, I presume," said Dick coolly. "Sheer love of opposition, I should not wonder. Goodness knows, I met with enough of it."

"What was your father?" asked Mr. Franks.

"He was in the City—a stockbroker. I was with him for some time, but a certain little incident occurred which made it absolutely necessary for me to leave him."

"What was that?"

"Well, you see, I was always fond of books, and though I was taken from school very young, as was necessary if I was to do any good in business, I still indulged my old liking by buying a book whenever I could screw money enough out of my allowance. Old classics were my especial hobby, and one day, when I was about fifteen, I brought home a dear little *Elzevir*, to get the money for which I had gone without pudding for a month. I gave it a place of honour on my book-shelf, and spent the whole evening in worshipping and arranging my favourites. I suppose my absence excited my father's curiosity, for when I came home from the office next day I found neither shelf nor books. My father had sold them. Upon my word, I believe I felt, for a time, as badly as a mother would who had lost her child. I sat down and cried like a great baby, and my father came up and told me that I was a fool for my

pains, and that he would have me study no books save my account-book. So I took my life into my own hands then. I felt as though I should become quite wicked if I went to the office again—almost bad enough to put my account-book in the fire, and I believe that would have been as bad as murder in my father's eyes."

"You poor boy!" exclaimed Clarence impetuously.

"Poor father, rather, Clarence," said Dick gently and rather sadly. "It was a grievous disappointment to him. I was his only son, you know."

"Could you not help it?" asked Mr. Franks.

"No, sir; I could not help it," said Dick, and the older man accepted his answer for truth, and let the question pass.

When Mr. Franks rose to go, and Gordon had seen him off the premises, he turned back and said to Dick:

"Can you take a pew for me in that man's chapel?"

"Yes, surely," answered Dick. "But will you not wait a little? You are so impulsive, Gordon."

"Now or never is your time, lad. Do not be a humbug, Dick; you know it is just what you wish me to do."

"I do not deny it, old fellow," said Dick. "So hand over the money and I'll go to-morrow and pay the first quarter in advance. That will ensure your going to chapel; you'll want to feel that you have your money's worth."

So the matter was settled, and on the following Sunday Gordon took possession of a pew in the old square chapel on the green. It was a corner pew, red-cushioned, and not too comfortable; but on all those bright summer Sundays that followed, as Gordon and Clarence sat in it, they could see, through the open chapel-door, full-foliaged lime-trees waving coolly, with a gentle rustle of greeneth. Other lime-trees brushed softly against the dusty window above their heads, and let the sunlight through in patches. They grew to love the place, old and shabby as it was, and found no fault with the music, though it was poor; nor with the order of service, though at first it struck them as somewhat bald and cold. They read over and over again, until they knew them by heart, the quaint inscriptions on the old mural tablets, and wondered what manner of a life had been led by the old lady who was granddaughter to an Earl and yet had remained a spinster all her life, and whether the lady who was

described as "An obedient daughter, a loving mother, a tender sister, and a true wife," was really very much liked in her earthly relations. There was a prevailing atmosphere of peace in the little chapel, and Gordon found there more rest for his wearied mind and spirit than he had ever enjoyed before. Nor was his pleasure lessened by the fact that he received from Mr. Franks abundant and wholesome food for an intellect which had too long been educated on one line only.

### THE TERRORS OF SCHOOL.

THE death of a King's College boy a little while ago once more drew attention to the practice of bullying in public schools; and the measures which are being taken by the Public Prosecutor will no doubt make school-life pleasanter. From time immemorial some form of brutality has been practised upon new comers in public schools, or upon the weak by the strong. "Ah, happy years! Once more who would not be a boy!" exclaimed Byron. The answer depends entirely upon the character of the school one was forced to attend, upon the whim of the master, and the disposition of one's schoolfellows. Our impression is that few would care to go through their schoolboy troubles again, and to be in constant terror of the bigger boys.

Things are bad enough now, but they were worse at the beginning of the century. Does any man, be he old or young, ever forget the treatment to which he was subjected at school? The rich and the strong were always respected. How fared it with the poor and the feeble?

Serjeant Ballantine was subjected to tyranny because he was badly dressed and had no pocket-money; and there was a fat brute, named Thomson, who used to thrash him unmercifully; but, one afternoon, the Serjeant says, "I hurt his head with a leaden inkstand, and, although I got well caned for this little accident, I found it had a good effect upon my persecutors." Others have had the same experience. When Carlyle was sent to school his mother piously enjoined on him that he should, under no conceivable circumstances, fight with any boy, nor resist any evil done him, and her instructions were so solemn that for a long time he was accustomed to submit to every kind of injustice simply for her sake. It was a sad mistake, he says. When it was

practically discovered that he would not defend himself, every kind of indignity was put upon him, and his life made utterly miserable. Fortunately, the strain was too great. "One day," he says, "a big boy was annoying me, when it occurred to my mind that existence under such conditions was not supportable, so I slipped off my wooden clog, and therewith suddenly gave that boy a blow which sent him sprawling on face and stomach in a convenient mass of mud and water. I shall never forget the burthen that rolled off me at that moment. I never had a more heartfelt satisfaction than in witnessing the consternation of that contemporary. It proved to me a measure of peace also; from that time I was troubled by the boys no more."

The little boy has certainly a sorry time of it at school; but, as he is generally the possessor of more brain-power than the big boy, he is enabled to secure protection at times. When Wilkie Collins was at school he secured the protection of a big boy by telling him stories. Protection cannot always be secured, either by doing a big lad's sums, or telling stories; and there are certainly not many boys who could tell a story like Wilkie Collins. Cowper suffered much from the cruelty of boys older and stronger than himself, who took a malicious delight in tyrannising over him; and such was the effect of the savage treatment upon his gentle spirit that, speaking of a lad of about fifteen years of age, who acted towards him with peculiar barbarity, he says: "I well remember being afraid to lift my eye upon him higher than his knees, and I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress. May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory!"

But the most amusing account of the desire to tease and tyrannise over a new comer at school is furnished by the late William Howitt. He was educated at Ackworth School, a well-known elementary school of the Friends, and situated near Pontefract, in Yorkshire. His first trial here is thus described: "There was a lad called Billy Bull—a long, thin lad, with a smooth, impudent face, and remarkably white hair. He soon discovered that I was very shy; for, bold and affable as I had always felt myself in my own circle, here all was so strange to me that I for some time felt solitary, and even bashful; and it was his delight to come and stare silently in my face. Whenever he spied me alone, he

was sure to come running, and look steadfastly in my face without a word, without a smile. Turn whichever way I would, he turned too; go where I would, he followed; now he kept on this side, now on that; now looked over my shoulder, and now came again directly in front. This he kept up for some weeks, and I was ashamed of complaining or asking anybody to take my part. Sometimes he would encounter me in a narrow passage, and, spite of all my remonstrances and endeavours to pass him, there he kept the way with his imperturbable and eternal stare. If I went to the boys' garden, Billy Bull started up from behind a bush; if I retired to a solitary corner, he found me; if I walked in the most public place it was only the better to be seen by him. The persecution had become intolerable to me, and yet I blushed at the very idea of complaining to anyone that Billy Bull looked into my face. If I told any of the boys, I expected they would laugh at me; if I told a master, I expected all the school would laugh at me. But to me it was no laughing matter, and when I saw Billy Bull coming I have often burst into tears of vexation, which seemed to produce no other change in his system of tormenting than an evident satisfaction in his large grey eyes. But at length the day of deliverance came—the torment reached its acme—the spirit that never was quite asleep in me started up in active indignation, and as Billy Bull was one day gazing in my face, with his nose not many inches from mine, I raised my hand, and gave him such a thwack on the cheek as made the tears start into his eyes, and his face became one piece of crimson in ludicrous contrast with his snow-white hair. He made no attempt at retaliation. I left him to his reflections; and from that day forward Billy Bull left me to mine. This incident passed, I found myself very comfortable." Howitt took the only means possible to ensure his own comfort at school, and we think every other boy would be justified in using the same means under the same circumstances.

Another illustration of the necessity of a boy's defending himself occurs in Alexander Somerville's autobiography. On account of his shabby dress and the frequency with which the schoolmaster thrashed him, the other boys believed him to be a great, stubborn lad, who had no feeling in him. One day, however, he undeceived them. They carried their perse-

cution too far. Not satisfied with calling him the "ragged radical," they tore his clothes. "The hat I raised from where it had sunk over my face," he remarks, "and saw part of the brim in the hands of a lad who was a kind of king of the school, or cock of the walk, with some of my mother's threads hanging from it. He was older than I, and a fighter. I had never fought, nor had I heard of two human creatures going together to fight until I came to that school. Yet neither had I heard of the Divine principle of forbearance and forgiveness as regards blows upon the body, and the laceration of feelings worse than blows upon the body; my father, who gave me many good precepts, probably never having contemplated the possibility of my being a fighting boy. But I was a strong boy for my age, and I had received very bad treatment. My honour and the remembrance of my affectionate mother's toils made me feel like a giant. I amazed the king of the school by giving him a blow in the face that laid him flat on his back, and amazed the onlookers by giving several of them as much with the same results. Not that I escaped without blows myself; I got many, but they were returned with principal and interest." For thus defending himself he was thrashed by the schoolmaster most severely. "He at once ordered me to hold up my right hand, which I did, and received a violent cut on the edge of it, given with his whole strength. He ordered my left hand up, and up it went, and received a cut of the same kind, then my right, next my left, and so on he went until I had got six cuts on each hand. He had a way of raising himself upon his toes when he swung the heavy taws round his head, and came down upon his feet with a spring, giving the cuts slantingly on the hand."

Happily the use of the taws is now a thing of the past. With the stocks for drunken men, and the branks for scolding women, the taws has been consigned to the curiosity shop as one of the relics of the dark ages. But the tyranny exercised by boys continues, and seems likely to continue, for boys are generally very pugnacious. Professor Colvin tells us that Landor was pugnacious at school, but only against the strong. "You remember," he writes, in some verses addressed some seventy years later to an old school-companion:

"You remember that I fought  
Never with any but an older lad,  
And never lost but two fights in thirteen."

As a rule, however, the strong tyrannise over the weak, and thus make their school-life miserable. The question arises, What can be done to remedy the evil and to make school-life more enjoyable? It has been suggested that if boys' duty towards their weaker brethren, and the law of kindness generally, were more frequently enforced, it might be just as well as cramming so much learning into their heads.

Again, it is quite possible that if the masters ruled by kindness instead of brute force, their scholars would show more humanity outside the school-doors. Too often, even in our days, teachers resemble Hood's Irish schoolmaster, who kept his children

Sitting like timid hares, all trembling on their forms.

Schoolmasters have always had a reputation for severity, and have excelled in the use of the cane. In fact, flogging seems to have formed a part of the system of training in force at public schools. The great Reformer, Erasmus, remarks Archdeacon Farrar, has left us a painfully graphic account of how he saw a poor boy at St. Paul's cruelly beaten by a grave and reverend divine, for no fault whatever, but merely to show him the discipline of English boys. And so for centuries the bad custom of cruel education continued. It was for the purpose of securing milder treatment of children at school that Roger Ascham wrote his celebrated work on *The Schoolmaster*, but it does not seem to have effected any reform, for beating was thought the best way of reducing a boy into proper form or shape. At the end of the eighteenth century, Southey was expelled Westminster School because he had boldly denounced the system of flogging, contending that it proceeded from the devil. Even more brutality was exhibited at St. Paul's School during the present century. Serjeant Ballantine was a day-scholar at this institution, and he has written a graphic account of his masters, who were all tyrants—cruel, cold-blooded, unsympathetic tyrants. "Armed with a cane," he says, "and surrounded by a halo of terror, they sat at their respective desks. Under Durham, the smaller boys trembled; Edwards took the next in age. Each flogged continuously. The former, a somewhat obese personage, with a face as if cut out of a suet-pudding, was solemn in the performance of this his favourite occupation. The Rev. Mr. Edwards, on the con-

trary, though a cadaverous-looking object, was quite funny over the tortures he inflicted. . . . One of the favourite modes of inflicting pain adopted by these tyrants was, when the boys came in on a winter's morning, shivering and gloveless, to strike them violently with the cane over the tips of their fingers. I nearly learnt at that school the passion of hatred, and should probably have done so but that my mind was too fully occupied by terror. Bean was a short, podgy, pompous man, with insignificant features. His mode of correction was different in form, and I can see him now, with flushed, angry face, lashing some little culprit over back and shoulders until his own arm gave way under the exertion. Amongst the amusements of this gentleman, one was to throw a book—generally *Etick's Dictionary*, if I remember rightly—at the head of any boy who indulged in a yawn, and if he succeeded in his aim, and produced a reasonable contusion, he was in good humour for the rest of the day. I have met them all three since my school-days, and found them shallow and ignorant, no doubt with plenty of Greek and Latin in their heads, but without knowledge of human nature, or power of appreciating the different dispositions of their pupils."

The treatment was no better at Winchester. Anthony Trollope felt convinced that he was flogged oftener than any other human being alive. "It was just possible," he says, "to obtain five scourgings at Winchester, and I have often boasted that I obtained them all." The worst of Anthony Trollope's foes at school was his brother, about whom he writes: "In accordance with the practice of the college, which submits, or did then submit, much of the tuition of the younger boys to the elder, he was my tutor; and in his capacity of teacher and ruler, he had studied the theories of Draco. I remember well how he used to exact obedience after the manner of that lawgiver. Hang a little boy for stealing apples, he used to say, and other little boys will not steal apples. The doctrine was already exploded elsewhere, but he stuck to it with conservative energy. The result was that, as a part of his daily exercise, he thrashed me with a big stick."

The treatment of boys at the common schools of Scotland was, in the early part of the century, extremely barbarous. In his *Autobiography of a Working Man*, Alexander Somerville, "one who has whistled at the plough," gives a graphic



description of his dominion. The school-master was lame, and he became a teacher only for that reason; but, excepting the inordinate and cruel use of the taws for punishment, his system of teaching was considered better than that of any of the parish-schools at that time. What were the taws? Questioned as to why he was late one morning, Somerville remarks, "After some hesitation I, in my ignorance, gave him an answer which offended him; upon which he took his great leathern strap, thirty inches long, two and a half inches broad, and split half-way up into six thongs, the end of each having been burned in the fire to make it hard, the other end of the belt having a slit in it, into which he put his hand and wound it round his wrist. With this instrument, called the taws, he thrashed me on the hands, head, face, neck, shoulders, back, eyes—everywhere, until I was blistered. He wanted me to cry, but I would not, and never did for pain or punishment then or since, though my flesh is nervous and extremely sensitive."

Clergymen exhibited as much inhumanity as laymen. From the Life of Dr. Brock, who was for more than twenty years the most popular Baptist minister in London, we get another glimpse of the cruelty inflicted upon boys. When a little boy, he was placed at school under the care of a clergyman who was, to say the least, a brute. "There was literally no teaching. If I got through a sentence or two in translation without any monstrous mistakes, I was not punished; if I did mistake, there was no mercy. Sometimes it was, 'Strip, sir, that you may be birched.' At other times it was, 'Go, kneel in the middle of the room, and hold this book out at arm's-length.' At other times it was a fierce seizure of both my ears, or a savage grip at my throat, with as much shaking or dragging up and down the room as the prevailing burst of inhumanity inspired."

This picture of school tyranny in the early part of this century represents the brutal mode of punishment adopted several years later in private grammar-schools, as many men who have now reached middle age can testify.

So general was corporal punishment, that when Buckle was sent to school, his parents gave instructions that he was to learn nothing unless he chose, and should on no account be whipped. He did not choose, and his biographer tells us that he learnt nothing beyond "what fell into his

head;" but he became so interested in geometrical and algebraical demonstrations on the blackboard that he returned home with a first prize for mathematics. "So unexpected a distinction pleased his father so much that he asked him what he would like best as a reward—"To be taken away from school," was Buckle's reply; and his parents granted his request."

### THE PARIS CLAQUE.

FEW dictionaries supply us with all that is wanted to be known of the words actually current in a modern language. John Bellows's wonderful *Bonâ-fide French and English Pocket Dictionary* gives "Claque, substantive masculine, an operahat; claque, substantive feminine, a slap, also a clog." Stone's Dictionary brings us nearer to what we are in search of by "Claqueur, a noisy clapper or applauder." Encyclopædic Littré alone interprets "Claque, secondly, a troop of claqueurs in a theatre, 'The claque in vain endeavoured to maintain the new piece.'"

Here, then, at last, we have a clear definition of a singular fraternity, whose course of action is based on the belief that men and women are sheep, in more senses than one; that they are often very silly; that they go astray hardly knowing why, unless it be through the mere love of straying; that they frequently submit quietly to be shorn—hence the saying about a fool and his money—and, above all, that they are easily induced to follow a leader.

It is on this principle of preferring to be led, rather than to take the trouble of leading themselves, that many people pin their faith and their views of things in general on some particular journal or review, carefully abstaining from reading any other, or at least any other advocating opposite opinions.

To avoid this helpless and narrow-minded system, a French friend (who is supposed to have no political bias, or perhaps finds it prudent to keep that bias to himself), while discussing the matter in question, lately told me that, not to be even suspected of following any partisan editor's lead, when he went to his club, he made a point of reading, one after the other, the *Pays* (Bonapartist), the *Soleil* (Orleanist), the *Intransigent* (Destructivist), and the *Figaro* (as you like to call it). Nobody, therefore, could accuse him

of undue partiality; and the mixture of newspapers of different shades, like the blending of all the colours of the rainbow, produced in him the absence of colour, white, independence—that is, left his mind in a state of “carte blanche.”

In French matters theatrical the case is different. An audience, in the mass, is led not so much by newspaper criticism, written and printed after the representation is over, but by critics present in the flesh and blood, enthusiastically applauding during the performance, and strenuously urging others to applaud. The persons composing this band of approbationists (the palms of whose hands must have become hard, thick, and tough as rhinoceros leather from continued exercise in professional clapping), are an established institution, known as the *Claque*, otherwise “entrepreneurs de succès” (ensurers of success).

A good deal that is curious respecting these individuals is already known from tradition, rumour, and observation; but more has lately been revealed in the *Mémoires d'un Chef de Claque*,\* who has given us the benefit of his experience, coolly treating the whole of his proceedings as a question of tactics and a matter of business. M. Jules Lan is a man of genius. It was he who invented the pocket-handkerchief proof of a performer's pathos, which none but the most hardened of men and women could resist. He shall relate this master-stroke himself:

“At the time when the melodramas of Guilbert de Pixérécourt and others were flourishing, and lachrymose pieces were all the fashion, an original idea occurred to me—namely, to supply my men with pocket-handkerchiefs”—had they none of those useful articles before?—“requesting them to pull them out, wipe their eyes, and blow their noses while the most touching scenes of the play were going on. The effect was irresistible, and never failed; the whole house—especially the ladies—began to weep and wipe their eyes. One evening, a wag in the pit opened his umbrella to escape a wetting from the showers of tears.”

The *claque* pleads in favour of its existence that it is an absolutely necessary institution. It spurs and stimulates the actors, wakes up an inattentive public, and italicises the choice passages of a dramatic work. Parisian actors are fond of a little

applause at their first entry on the stage in any part, and almost exact its being given. Who is to be depended upon to supply it with certainty, except the *claque*? Moreover, as an excuse for the practice, every distinguished personage, at present, expects applause, from the cheers given to the successful orator in the House of Commons to the demonstrations of welcome bestowed on popular royalty.

Far from feeling any shame at its proceedings, the *claque* boasts that it is almost as old as the theatre itself. Whenever the Emperor Nero performed, he took measures to secure liberal applause from the audience. Burrhus and Seneca, stationed on each side of the stage, signalled the spectators to give marks of their approval. In fact, they were veritable “chefs de *claque*.”

Nero's ministers taught his subjects their duty by shouting “*Plaudite, cives!*”—“Citizens, applaud!”—a formula which became traditional at Rome, and was employed on other besides dramatic occasions. Hence the name of “Romains,” given to *claqueurs*, or professional applauders, who are also called “les chevaliers du lustre,” because they had adopted the habit of placing themselves in the middle of the pit, immediately under the chandelier, as visitors to the burnt-down Paris Opera may have experienced to their great annoyance.

*Claqueurs* are commanded by a chief and a sub-chief, the former being chosen by the manager of the theatre. On grand occasions, there are chiefs of detachments posted in different parts of the pit, with the skill of practised theatrical strategy. Consequently, these *claqueurs* not unfrequently do battle with hostile caballers who dare to hiss. Nor are they always without excuse for so doing. Violence and injustice are apt to call forth violence to resist them. A new piece may be hissed and hooted down by an adverse clique through other motives than fair and honest criticism.

Not to dwell on the party contests between the Gluckists and the Piccinists of the last century, and the classicists and the romanticists of the present, I may mention Edmond About's *Gaëtana*, which was crushed in 1862 by a concerted muster of his personal enemies. Three years afterwards, the two De Goncourts' *Henriette Maréchal* suffered the same fate, under the unexpected attacks of an upstart “chef de cabale,” nicknamed *Pipe-en-bois*. Still more recently, at the *Théâtre Français*, Ereckmann-Chatrian's charming comedy,

\* *Mémoires d'un Chef de Claque, Souvenirs des Théâtres*, Recueillis par Jules Lan. Paris, Librairie Nouvelle, 15, Boulevard des Italiens.

L'Ami Fritz, narrowly escaped premature extinction on equally unavowable grounds of hostility, by political rather than literary adversaries. The contests for supremacy between rival actors and actresses, sustained by their respective partisans, afford materials for a longer history of theatrical struggles and skirmishes than can be related here. In all these the claque has played, on one side or the other, an influential and important part.

Grave politicians have not disdained to undertake the office of *chef de claque*. When Rachel first appeared at the Comédie Française, she was favoured with the intimate friendship and constant advice of Adolphe Crémieux—like her, an Israelite—who rose to be Minister of Justice, member of two provisional governments, and was a senator when he died in 1880.

Whenever Rachel attempted a new part for the first time, she obtained for Crémieux a certain number of pit-tickets at reduced prices. Crémieux disposed of those tickets amongst friends and acquaintances, who were delighted to witness a first performance by Rachel without being obliged to "faire queue" at the door—one of the small miseries of French life.

By special favour granted to the famous tragedian, her family and friends, conducted by Crémieux, went into the theatre by a private entrance before the doors were opened to the public. Crémieux selected two or three benches, on which he seated his favoured friends, placing himself in the middle of the group. After his death, not one of the laudatory tributes to his memory mentioned that he had officiated as *chef de claque*. Vacher, the official *chef* at the Théâtre Français, observed every movement of his distinguished rival, knowing how much more capable than himself Crémieux was to italicise the points made by his (Crémieux's) co-religionist and pupil.

The greatest actors are not insensible to the claque's approval and patronage—sometimes even to its advice. Rachel owed her immense success to her resolution, from her very first appearances, to strive by every possible means to attain the artist's ideal—perfection. She knew that her illustrious predecessors, Lekain and Talma, following the traditional example of Roscius, had pursued that system, in order to act tragedy worthily. Talma, in fact, after creating, as it is called, a part, on retiring to his dressing-room, although loaded with garlands and applause, shut himself in, and once more carefully read

the piece which had just been acted. With a pencil he marked the passages in his part where he fancied that his diction or his gestures were still capable of improvement. Rachel, following the advice of Crémieux and a few other friends, did the same, with even greater success than had been expected.

One day, Crémieux offered M. Lan a place in the theatre to see Rachel come out in *Bajazet*—a civility which was gladly accepted at once. The tragedy over, after Rachel had been five times recalled to receive an avalanche of crowns and bouquets, old Félix, her father, came and thanked Crémieux and his friends for the ovation bestowed upon his daughter. Then, assuming parental modesty, he added, "But did you not remark, when Roxane says to *Bajazet*, '*Sortez!*' ('Leave me!'), that Rachel missed the right effect?"

They mounted, accordingly, to Rachel's room, to give her what her parent called "une remontrance," meaning a few observations, perhaps a scolding, for the old man could not conceal his excitement, which he explained, or excused, in German-Jew phrase: "Venever I see my daughter blay a new bart, it gives me gross balbitations of te heart." He ought to have said "balbitations of te bocket."

Crémieux desired nothing better than to go and compliment the "grande actrice." But he begged M. Félix to allow M. Lan to accompany them, after stating who and what he was—namely, *chef de claque*.

Rachel, still in sultana's costume, surrounded by her young brothers and sisters and a few intimate friends, received her visitors in the sanctum sanctorum, which none but the privileged were allowed to enter. She listened attentively to her father's reproaches, as well as to M. Crémieux's more courteous criticism.

"And you, M. Lan," she said to him, evidently curious to hear what he would say; "what is your opinion of my '*Sortez!*'?"

"Mademoiselle," he replied, "brilliant stars, like you, have no need of light; they eclipse all inferior luminaries. Nevertheless, permit me to cite an example. Talma, in *Manlius*, when convinced of his friend *Servilius*'s treachery, says to him, '*Qu'en dis-tu?*' ('How do you answer this?'). *Servilius* replies, '*Il est vrai! j'ai conçu ce funeste dessein*'—that is, avows his guilt. Talma, whose countenance expressed indignation and scorn, seized the handle of his dagger, and drew it half

out of its sheath, as if about to strike. The effect required by the situation was produced. Now, if you were to make the same gesture with the dagger fastened to your girdle, when you say to Bajazet, 'Sortez!' you would better indicate the fate which awaits the young prince at the palace-gate."

"Thanks—a thousand thanks, monsieur!" exclaimed Rachel. "You have found for me what I sought for in vain while I was studying my part."

And Rachel followed the *chef de claque's* counsel, thereby increasing the impressiveness and terror of the situation.

This anecdote—M. Lan modestly adds, although modesty is not his leading characteristic—shows the general public what long, profound, and conscientious study great artists devote to what is called "composer un rôle"—creating a part.

Amongst other distinguished theatrical acquaintances, M. Lan had the good fortune to include Mdlle. Mars. One day, unable to give him two stalls which he required, she sent him to Mdlle. Duchesnois, who passed him on, with a short note of introduction, to Talma. The great actor, although ill in bed with the malady, hypertrophy of the heart, which brought him to his grave, nevertheless received the *chef de claque*.

"Did you see me play my latest part in *La Démence de Charles Six*?" he asked.

"Certainly, I did. You were magnificent, and my hands are still blistered with applauding."

"What a pity," continued Talma, "that I should be taken ill, just when I was about to play in *La Mort du Tasse*! What a capital part I should have had!"

So saying, he sat up in the bed and declaimed the part of Tasso, exactly as if he had been on the stage, with the *chef de claque* for his sole critic and auditor.

M. Lan's Memoirs contain anecdotes of other persons besides *claqueurs*. As everything relating to theatres is full of interest for the outside public, the author, consequently, is not over-particular respecting the stories which he contrives to catch in the sweep of his net, theatrical lawsuits, which at the time filled the courts to overflowing, supplying a liberal contribution. At the trial of the thieves, her servants, who stole Mdlle. Mars's diamonds from her dressing-room while she was acting on the stage, great curiosity was manifested to see the actress off the boards, and to hear her speak in her everyday voice. The doors of the

assize-court were besieged; on two successive days the crowd waited for admission two by two in a line, exactly as when some unusually attractive performance is announced at one of the great theatres.

The same thing happened when Victor Hugo pleaded in person before the Tribunal of Commerce, to urge his rights in a question of literary property. Every corner was packed to suffocation. Nor was his audience disappointed. He was eloquent, persuasive, logical—a wonder for him—and gained his suit without the help of an advocate. A like success was not achieved by Balzac, who, powerful with his pen, was feeble with his tongue. In this respect he resembled our own Goldsmith, "who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

At the aforesaid trial, M. Lan had the honour of given his arm to Mdlle. Mars on their way to the Palais de Justice, where Berryer received them with the compliment, "Thalia is come to pay a visit to Thémis, who receives her with a hearty welcome." When the President, according to the established formula, enquired her name, profession, domicile, and age, she answered in her clear, melodious voice, "Hippolyte Mars, sociétaire of the *Comédie Française*, residing in Paris, Rue de la Tour-des-Dames," but as to her age, she spoke so low that the clerk of the court could not catch her words. The President had the good taste not to repeat the question.

Apropos of actresses's ages, M. Lan remembers that Mdlle. X., who still played ingénues at the Asterisk Theatre, one day married her daughter, and he was invited to the wedding as one of the witnesses. The bride's mother, on being required to state her age, stammered, blushed, and said at last, "I don't quite remember."

"Very good," said the mayor to his secretary; "put down thirty-six."

Mdlle. X. responded with a gracious bow to the magistrate's municipal gallantry.

A very great deal might be related about the subordinate members of the theatrical profession. Gossip respecting or disrespecting the ladies shall be refrained from; the gentlemen can well take care of themselves.

Supernumeraries, "comparses," existed in the time of the Romans. Their French name is perhaps derived from "comparere," to appear. They are recruited and commanded by chiefs who receive ten sous a night more than their men; besides which magnificent pay they enjoy the privilege of inflicting fines. It is evident that these



poor wretches, who earn from fifteen to twenty sous a night, have not the means of supplying themselves with evening dress when they figure as fashionable guests at a ball, a wedding, or a soiree. Parsimonious administrations rig them out by making an arrangement with an old clothes shop.

Notwithstanding this indignity the male supernumeraries in a theatre consider themselves to be somebody in no way inferior to the leading actors. One day, when Lekain, the famous tragedian of the Théâtre Français, had his shoes blacked in the street, the shoeblack refused the offered payment. "No, no," he said; "colleagues don't take money from each other. We are comrades. You play the kings; I play the Greek and Roman soldiers."

To figure on the stage, even in this humble way, is sometimes a monomania. At the Variétés there was a chorus-singer with an income of a thousand pounds a year. After the first performance of a piece he treated the other chorus-singers to punch at the café of the theatre, telling them, "We have done our utmost to ensure success. It is the manager and the authors who ought to treat us, but, as you know, they are a set of skinflints."

French supers are not to be trifled with. In a tragedy given at the Odéon, Eric-Bernard, who played Artaxerxes, killed himself at the dénouement. The stage-manager had given the supernumeraries orders to catch Artaxerxes, mortally wounded, in their arms, and carry him off the stage. The first night, out of clumsiness or mischievous fun, they let poor Eric-Bernard fall on the boards. He hurt himself, and abused them roundly as a "set of canailles! Auvergnats! useless animals!" and the rest. Then, complaining to their chief, he got every one of them fined.

The following evening, the moment Artaxerxes had stabbed himself, they rushed at him furiously and hauled him more roughly than was agreeable. "The scamps!" he grumbled as soon as he was in the wing; "yesterday they let me break my bones, and to-night they have pinched me black and blue."

Supers are very particular about the distribution of parts. In a fairy piece a set of dominos was represented by men wearing on their backs boards marked with the different numbers. A discontented super gave in his resignation, and told the management they must find a substitute.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the

astonished directeur; "don't you get your fifteen sous a night like the others?"

"It isn't about the sous at all. I am one of the oldest artists belonging to the theatre, and they ought to have made me the double six; instead of that I am the lowest number—the double blank. Rather than submit to such injustice I prefer to leave the theatre."

With difficulty an exchange was effected with another less punctilious super.

Another complained of being put into the hind legs of an elephant, whilst his comrade, a junior member of the corps, occupied the front. He revenged himself by kicking the forelegs' heels every time that their march commenced.

At the time when military pieces were played at the now demolished theatre of the Cirque, double pay had to be given to supers who consented to wear Austrian, Russian, or Prussian uniforms. A French soldier only got fifteen sous and the glory. What most humiliated a super was, not to be killed in battle, but to be taken prisoner.

At a general rehearsal, a Prussian was told how he ought to deliver up his sword to a Frenchman. "Never!" shouted the super. "Kill me, if you like; but, as to giving up my sword, none of that, if you please! I throw up my engagement."

A compromise was made with this hero. He changed his costume, put on a French uniform, and received fifteen sous less; but his honour was saved.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### CORNWALL.

NOTWITHSTANDING bright sun and clear, translucent seas, an air of mystery and gloom seems to hang about the coasts of Cornwall. A savage, rock-bound coast is backed by hills that are bleak and barren, without beauty or grandeur; and the little towns that lie among the hollows in the rugged landscape are distinguished by the melancholy bareness that is characteristic of the dwelling-places of the Celtic race. Dispossessed and driven to the bleak corner of the pleasant land that was once ours, of what use to make the desert blossom around us, or disguise the melancholy facts of life by pleasant surroundings? Such is the unspoken lament that is suggested by the aspect of the native settlements in Wales or Cornwall. Among the rugged hills and wild, bleak moorlands, the rude buildings of some deserted mine have the

same pathetic suggestiveness as the broken circle of huge stones, or the hoary cromlech uplifted against the sky.

Long ago the desert, solitary land was thinly peopled by anchorites and monks, and the missionaries—pure and visionary—of the early Celtic Church established their settlements here and there on rock or promontory, or on some barren islet among the waves.

They had their lodges in the wilderness,  
Or built their cells beside the shadowy sea.

But along with the colonies of the cenobites there existed a still more ancient population, the metal-workers, who from unknown antiquity had worked the tin-mines along the coast. Even in dim prehistoric ages—as far back, perhaps, as the pre-glacial period, when England, as yet unsevered from the Continent of Europe, enjoyed an almost tropical climate, and the mammoth and the elephant roamed through the primeval forests, even then there is evidence that there were men at work, washing the ore from the surface lodes, and fusing the material for those weapons of bronze that made a distinct epoch in the history of humanity. And while the rest of Britain was still a country unknown to the great civilised communities on the Mediterranean shores, the rugged promontory of Cornwall and the islands to the westward were frequented by the galleys of the Phœnicians. Merchants from Tyre and Sidon, and, later, from proud Carthage, sought the sheltered bays and coasts, and bartered the rich wares of the East for the precious tin which nowhere else could be had, unless in the less rich and accessible mines of the Spanish peninsula. Here, too, came the Greeks from their rich colony of Marseilles, and, later still, the Romans, not yet thinking of conquest. And thus under their own laws and in communities not much recruited from the shifting population about them, the miners have gone on working, paying their tribute to Cæsar or Caswallon, to Saxon Prince or Norman Duke; but finding, in later days, their old free bond gradually subjected to the feudal influences of the period.

In the reign of John, we find that the royal dues were farmed out to the Jews, who settled in some numbers on the scene of their exactions. Under their skilful management the produce of the mines was greatly increased, and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, John's younger son, was so enriched by the tribute of his rich principality, that he was enabled to purchase the suc-

cession to the Empire and the barbaric diadem of the King of the Romans. When the Jews were expelled from England, those of Cornwall went mournfully forth from this land of Goshen, and from that time the miners' tribute fell off woefully in amount, although the miners themselves may have been no losers by the change. Through it all the tanners had kept up their own free organisation, and, combined with the miners of Devon, had held a general convention on Hengston Hill at intervals of seven years. But by the Thirty-third Edward the First, the tanners of Cornwall were made a separate body, with representatives chosen by the four stannary towns—namely, Launceston, Lostwithiel, Truro, and Helston; and at a later date, in the reign of Charles the Second, Penzance was made a fifth representative town.

Another element in the population were the Scandinavian rovers who, in the bays and creeks of this indented coast, found safe and congenial habitations. As the old saying has it:

By Tre, Pol, and Pen, you shall know the Cornish men.

These are all Celtic prefixes, and mark the original British settlements. Equally by bay and fiord, and nase or ness, we may recognise the presence of an alien element on the coast, and although the old Celtic names greatly predominate, yet in Helston and Helford river, in Dodman Point and Whitesand Bay, we recognise names of the real Northern type. And still the coast population is chiefly Celtic—not rovers and seafarers like the men of Devon, but hugging the coast with their small fishing-craft, and by nature inhospitable—perhaps also taught by harsh experience—to those who are cast upon their shores. A fatal coast to seamen has long been this iron-bound promontory, whose shape has given its ancient name to the county. It is Cernyw—the county of the Cornabii, of the Cornweallas, all derived from the cor, or cornu, which in Welsh and Latin denotes a horn—the British Cape Horn, in fact, and as rugged and dangerous to early navigators, and its inhabitants as cruel as that rude cape among the Patagonian savages.

From Padstow Point to Lundy Light  
Is a watery grave by day or night.

And the inhumanity that would leave the shipwrecked stranger to perish while busy appropriating the floating wreckage is justified in the cruel saying:

Save a stranger from the sea,  
And he'll turn your enemy.

It is not so long, indeed, since the dialect of Welsh, known as Cornish, was still a living, spoken tongue. Old Dolly Pentreath, who died about 1788, was the last of the Cornweallas who could speak her native language freely.

Old Dol Penreath, one hundred age and two,  
Both born and in Paul parish buried too.

Old Dol's cottage was at Mousehold, not far from Penzance, and she had a reputation for a knowledge of the black art, which she exercised in telling fortunes and selling charms, although her ostensible occupation was that of a fish-hawker.

Old superstitions, and a belief in sorcery and witchcraft, still linger in many parts. The famous parson, Hawker, of Morwenstow, the writer of some of the most stirring English ballads of modern times, tells us how, in his day, the parson was looked upon as an exorcist, familiar with the powers of darkness if officially their opponent. Many will remember Parson Hawker's story of the farmer and Cherry Parnell, a reputed witch; the farmer having had a colt struck dead by lightning, presumably by her influence, thus addresses his pastor in mild remonstrance: "I do think, when I've paid tithe and rate faithfully all these years, such ones as old Cherry Parnell never ought to be allowed to meddle with such things as thunder and lightning."

Equally characteristic of the old manners and customs of the Cornish land—where, as in Wales, the old parish clergy often were of a very lively and festive disposition—is the story of the Cornish parson whose Bishop remonstrates with him as to certain accusations of riotous living—actually fights in the vicarage. "Lor', my dear, doant y' believe it. When they begin fighting, I take and turn 'em out into the churchyard."

And yet the land is everywhere studded with churches, whose titles recall the early ages of faith and enthusiasm, and the temporal rule of the saints over the land—saints, many of whose names are unknown beyond the narrow limits of their earthly pilgrimage. St. Germans, indeed, in its romantic dell among the waters of the great Plymouth estuary, commemorates the famous Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who visited Cornwall some time in the fifth century, and led the natives to a great victory over the heathen. But who knows anything about St. Brecock or St. Stithian, and where shall we find the lives of St. Buryan, or St. Erth, or any account of

the doings of St. Mubyn, or St. Wenn? St. Columb, indeed, is more familiar, though, probably, a Breton saint of the same name as our Columba of Iona is here commemorated.

Indeed, it is rather in Brittany than in England, or even in Wales, that we shall find the analogue of the early institutions of Christian Cornwall, a land of saints, and cenobites, and monasteries at a time when all the rest of the neighbouring land acknowledged the stern sway of the gods of the Teutonic mythology. The monastery was then the religious centre of the district, and the abbot ruled over the country round, while a sacred circle of several miles around the convent enjoyed the most precious immunities. Nor was the convent merely an abode of learning, or even of devotion; it was also an industrial community, the centre of the simple home manufactures of the period, the academy of the bizarre and yet not ungraceful art of that remote period.

The crumbling foundations of one of these ancient religious settlements may be found by the adventurous yachtsman cruising among our British Hesperides. On Tresco, a small island of the Scilly group, in a beautiful situation by a fresh-water lake, near the residence of the proprietor of the island, some relics may be found of these early settlers. These had perished, probably, in the piratic visitations of the heathen Danes; but the supremacy of the convent over the neighbouring isles was still acknowledged when King Athelstan repopled the ruined settlement with Saxon monks. Later on, the monastery was abandoned, and the lordship of the islands transferred to Tavistock Abbey. Not of the whole, however, for some of the islands remained in the possession of the Crown, which farmed them at a yearly rent of three hundred puffsins. As the rent in kind could be transmuted to a cash payment of six shillings and eightpence, the then value of a puffin may easily be calculated.

The Scilly Islands themselves are worth a visit, and if the yacht is not available, there is steam communication from Penzance. On calm summer days there is beauty enough in the emerald seas, crystal-clear, and showing deep down the rocky floor of bay and inlet, with sands of every dazzling colour, and a wealth of life in fishes and zoophytes, where swim the red mullet and the John Dory, with great cuttle-fish, and, perhaps, basking on a solitary

rock, a seal, the last of a once numerous colony. In winter-time it is, however, a wild and lonely scene, where the surges beat high against the savage rocks, and the islands, wrapped in mist and flying sea-drift, seem in danger of being overwhelmed altogether in the waves. Then the talk is of shipwrecks and disasters at sea, and you may hear the story of Sir Cloudesley Shovel and the four British men-of-war, all wrecked and perished on these cruel rocks.

It was on the night of the 22nd of October, 1707, that Sir Cloudesley Shovel, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet—who had begun life as a cabin-boy, or powder-monkey, on board ship, and had fought his way up to the highest rank—was sailing for Plymouth, in the Association, at the head of his squadron, coming from the blockade of Toulon, with the wind fair up the Channel, but a dense fog and pitchy darkness everywhere. And thus the great war-ship ran full tilt on the Gilstone Rock, and was shattered to fragments, while the Eagle, the Romney, and the Firebrand, in her wake, followed the fatal lead, and broke to pieces one after the other, embayed among the rocks in Porthelok Cove. Some five-and-twenty men of the whole crews escaped by clambering up the rocks, but next morning the shores of St. Mary's Isle were strewn with corpses, and among them was recognised that of the brave old Admiral. The fishermen of the island gave him a sailor's grave among the sands, but he had a brave funeral afterwards in Westminster Abbey, where his monument is still to be seen.

An earlier story is that told by Leland of the total depopulation of St. Agnes, which has now, however, a small colony of lighthouse-keepers and fishermen. It seems that the whole of the inhabitants of the island, men, women, and children, five households in all, left their homes one fine summer morning, put out their fires, left their doors on the latch, and rowed away to make merry at a marriage-feast on St. Mary's Isle. But those hearths were never warm again, and no footstep crossed the thresholds ever more; for as they were sailing home a sudden squall rushed upon them from the wild Atlantic, and all went down together—the life of the whole community, with its joys and sorrows, its loves and jealousies, all being quenched in the depths of the fierce, relentless sea.

A fortress of Queen Elizabeth's time, on St. Mary's Isle, which may have fired a salvo at the Spanish Armada as it passed, is still held by a small garrison with batteries and works of a more modern kind about it. Here, too, may be traced the fortifications thrown up by Sir John Grenville for the Crown, in 1649, when the islands were held against the Parliament, and became a rendezvous for the privateers that preyed upon the commerce of the coast, almost entirely in the hands of the Puritan party. Admiral Blake, however, with a fleet, brought the islands to a surrender, and they have not since declared war against the mainland.

But if we are in search of a people of proud and independent spirit we must go to Fowey, probably, as its name seems to indicate, an early Scandinavian settlement, and thus naturally long distinguished for its adventurous seamen, alike ready to trade or fight on occasion. The harbour, deep and landlocked, runs up between rocks and headlands, where ruined towers crown the points, and once upon a time a heavy chain was stretched across the entrance to keep all safe and snug within. As free as the wind and as bold were the gallants of Fowey, sailing and plundering where they listed along the Norman seaboard, or upon the Spanish coast. At times, too, they waged war with their own countrymen. As when the ships of Fowey, sailing by Rye and Winchelsea about Edward the Third's time, would vaile no bonnet, for the Cinque Ports then stood upon their dignity, and required that their flag should be saluted by passing vessels. Upon this the men of Rye and Winchelsea swarmed out in their galleys to avenge the insult, and there was a stout running fight, in which Fowey claimed the victory. As a trophy, in true chivalric style, Fowey forthwith assumed the arms of Rye and Winchelsea, and flaunted their new flag in the faces of the Cinque Ports men. Whence arose more fights, no doubt, the particulars of which are not recorded.

Again, when the war with France was ended, in Edward the Fourth's time, Fowey still continued it, and captured all French vessels as lawful prize. But here the King was obliged to interfere. He had been richly paid for the peace, and more crowns were coming in if it was kept, so that he was naturally indignant. But wanting the power, perhaps, to punish the Fowey men himself, he commissioned the rival port of Dartmouth to bring the



recusants to reason. And the Dartmouth men carried off their rivals' ships under the King's warrant, and from that time the gallants of Fowey had to bate their pretensions.

Close by Fowey, immediately above the town, stands the Plas, the fine old seat of the Trefrys, which has more than once been fortified against the French, and which, from its name, and the relics found about it, was probably the seat of the ancient princes of West Wales.

Here, too, occurred a notable incident in the civil wars, when the Earl of Essex, surrounded by the King's troops, abandoned his army and took ship for Plymouth. After his departure the Parliamentary cavalry managed to gallop through the enemy's lines with little loss, and so escaped to fight again, but the infantry surrendered; while it seemed to those around as if the triumph of the royal cause were fully assured. Robert Herrick wrote a poem thereupon, addressing the king as bringing victory in his train, and so the Cavaliers went on, drinking healths, and singing songs, and making the most of their victories as lawful occasions of festivity, till they found another kind of enemy in the field.

It was not in loyalty to the Stuarts, as might be supposed, that the neighbouring port of Charlestown received its present name, but from its founder, Charles Rashleigh, who about a century ago made a harbour of the old Porthmaur. The cause of all this activity is to be found in the discovery of a great bed of china-clay, which was made by a Quaker named Cookworthy, who, in watching the founding of some bells at Fowey, noticed the peculiar conduct of the clay under strong heat. Perhaps it would have been better for the Quaker if he had minded his own business instead of inconsistently running after the founding of bells. For Cookworthy forthwith began a porcelain manufacture at Plymouth, the pieces of which are now much sought by collectors, but which were not in any great demand when they were made. Anyhow, the manufacture failed, and Bristol took it up and failed also. Then Josiah Wedgwood got hold of the clay, and made it answer his purpose. And thus there is still a trade more or less brisk between Charlestown and the pottery districts.

Then close by we have St. Austell, with more china-clay, with tin and lead mines all about—a veritable metropolis of the mining world, familiar to many swarthy

captains of mines scattered over the known world; for wherever there is digging or delving for gold, silver, copper, lead, or tin, there you may find the Cornish captain controlling the drifts and diggings, and holding in his hand the keys of the underground world.

Near St. Austell, too, are two famous barrows, the Cock and Hen Barrows—great mounds commemorating some mighty chiefs of old—on high ground, from which it is said all Cornwall may be seen. The Hen is Welsh and means old, so that the mount was an antiquity to the Celts themselves, but the Cock is due to the imaginative Saxon, who thought it unnatural that the Hen should live in single blessedness.

Then there is Probus, on high ground, with its fine perpendicular church-tower, recalling Magdalen, Oxford, a noble architectural monument, the pride of the men of Cornwall, who are not rich in such things. Those primitive old saints of theirs were accustomed to build their churches with their own hands. There is a legend of two saints, some say St. Peter and St. Paul, who, coming to a broad river, separated, and began to build each a church on his own side. They had only one hammer between them, or perhaps trowel, but on second thoughts they did not use mortar, and shaped the rough stones they picked up with this single hammer. Well, in this strait they pitched the hammer from one to another across, say, a mile or so of water, and so the building went merrily on. But the minor saints, at any rate, could not be expected to do anything very great in the way of church-building.

In these latter days we have the unaccustomed spectacle of a new cathedral rising from its foundation. The diocese of Cornwall was created in 1876, and already, at Truro, a fine cathedral has been built, with a massive central tower two hundred and fifty feet high, with a nave of nine bays, a spacious western front, a great transept, and fine porch. The old parish church of St. Mary, spacious and well lighted, of the later perpendicular style, has almost disappeared to make room for the cathedral, but the south aisle of the old church has been incorporated in the new building.

At the mouth of the fine estuary that stretches inland as far as Truro, whose Celtic title recalls the ancient river-name, for it is clearly Tre-evro, the town on the Ebro, or the Eure—at the mouth of this

river, which it seems ridiculous to call the Fal, stands Falmouth, a busy port of comparatively modern origin. Sir Walter Raleigh, it is said, was the first to mark the capabilities of the site for a port, although, in his time, there were only a couple of houses on the spot and a blacksmith's shop. The place was then known as Penny-come-quick, and a trivial legend accounted for the title as given it by a woman who sold ale there, and found the pennies come so quick that her barrels were dry when her chief patron paid her a visit. But it goes without saying that the name is essentially Welsh. However, the owner of the neighbouring lands, Sir John Killigrew, taking note of Sir Walter's suggestion, began building operations here in 1613, and, ere long, the place became of some commercial importance. In 1660, Falmouth it became by royal proclamation, and soon after, by royal favour—for Killigrew was a well-known name in the merry Court of King Charles—the town was endowed with municipal privileges. The port became a great resort of Dutch shipping, and still does a considerable trade in the products of mines and quarries. Pendennis Castle, on a lofty mount, defends the approach to the estuary—a castle still armed with England's thunder, though of a rather antiquated type. On the opposite side of the estuary another old castle, of the time of Henry the Eighth, crosses its fire with that of Pendennis.

Out of Falmouth Bay opens the lonely inlet of the Helford river, with ancient villages scattered along its shore, and among the barren granite hills is one that bears the name of Constantine—perhaps from the days of old Rome, as a puny rival to Byzantium. And this reminds us that descendants from the Emperors of the lower empire are still to be met with in the Cornish land.

In the church of Landulph, on the Tamar, is a mural monument to Theodore Paleologus, who died in 1636, leaving a numerous issue by his wife, Mary, who was the daughter of William Ball, of Hadlye, in Suffolk. Theodore was sixth in descent from the Emperor Manuel the Second, and among his collateral lineage was Constantine, the last of the Emperors of New Rome, who was killed in the storming of the city by the Turks.

A few miles across the peninsula that stretches out to meet the Atlantic surges, and is crowned by the strange igneous cliffs that form the Lizard Head, a point

often hailed with delight by the homeward-bound voyager as the first glimpse of Old England, but not often visited from the landward side—across this peninsula lies Helston, an ancient town, once noted for its curious festival, called Helston Fary, on the 8th of May, when the chief inhabitants of the town, the ladies of the community at the head of the procession, would dance down the high-street, crowned with garlands of flowers, and entering every house, distributed kisses and flowers to its fortunate inmates. The festival is still kept up, although not, perhaps, with the old happy freedom and gaiety.

Half a mile south of Helston the river expands into a fine lake-like sheet of water called Loe Pool, which is cut off from the sea by a natural breakwater of pebbles, and following the iron-bound coast, we come to Marazion, or Market Jew, concerning the name of which Professor Max Muller discourses pleasantly in his *Chips*. Suffice it to say that he disposes of its claim to Hebrew origin. Just off Marazion lies St. Michael's Mount.

St. Michael's Mount who does not know,  
That wards the western coast?

Here, surely, dwelt the fierce Cornish giant, who, striding over the sands, visited and devastated the mainland, and was slain by Jack the Giant-Killer. The ruins of an ancient monastery, as well as the remains of a feudal castle, crown the steep rocky mount which has often afforded a refuge for fugitives from political troubles. Here came the Earl of Oxford and other knights, fugitives from Barnet and Tewkesbury, when the red rose was trodden underfoot, and crushed in blood and dust. Gaining admittance under the guise of pilgrims to the fortress-convent, they took possession of the castle, and held out till they obtained their freedom from the Yorkist King. Here, too, in the Cornish rebellion of Edward the Sixth's time, a sort of pendant to Kett's rebellion in the Eastern Counties, the chief families of Cornwall took refuge. The insurgents, whose only artillery were bows and arrows, took the castle notwithstanding.

In earlier days a bond of spiritual allegiance connected the monastery with the more famous abbey of St. Michael's on the rocky island of the Breton gulf, still an object of pilgrimage for the Cornishman's brother Celts on the mainland.

And now we come to Penzance, the most westerly town in England, which was taken and burnt by the Spaniards when Henri

Quatre was fighting for his crown with our Elizabeth's grudging help. A pleasant resting-place is Penzance, with a climate of Mediterranean mildness—a town where railways come to an end, and one solitary highway runs on to the mighty rocks of the Land's End.

And rounding this rugged cape of storms, the rocky northern coast of Cornwall stretches before us, with scattered fishing-villages in its creeks and hollows, right away to Arthur's mystic seat.

Full charged with old world wonders  
From dusk Tintagel thunders,  
A note that smites and sunders,  
The hard froze fields of air.

### A WIRE FRAME.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MEANTIME, I was no nearer getting the thing back than at first. My visitor, who had left her seat, was buttoning her gloves and smoothing her muff, apparently preparing to leave.

"I request you to tell me," I said, "what I am expected to do in this matter. It seems you do not intend to restore the frame, and I have not heard yet how you got it."

"Well, sir, that's simple enough. I had our own figure, for my young ladies are mostly one size, and what fits the one does not go far wrong with the others. I had it ordered at Salvage and Sample's, and they were to send it last week; and I was down at the junction—it's not a mile from Squire Acton's. I was down to see a brother of mine that's guard on the upper line, only he got a run down to Southport, goin' away to get married, and sailing in the Scotch boat that night; and a heap of fuss there was at the junction, three trains meeting, and I was talking to him at the van-door, for his train had to wait a bit, and I sees the figure. 'Oh,' says I, 'leave that out; there's what I've been waiting for these three days.' 'What is it?' says he, for the way it was lying it looked like a big brown parcel, and I was, I may say, inside the van, and I just quickly lifted it. 'It's my young ladies' figure,' says I, and I stepped out, and he handed it to me. There's the way I got it—of course, thinking it was from Salvage and Sample's, or would I have taken it, do you think?—and our groom was down at the junction with a pony-trap, and I just took it home with me; and then, yesterday, my young ladies' aunt, Miss Moore—she lives with them, you know; she's missus's sister

—she was down to meet someone at the train, and she saw the bill stuck up, and brought one of them home, and what made the Captain so merry about it was it saying the information was to be given to Jeremiah Hawkins, Esquire, Royal Hotel, Conway."

"It doesn't say that!" I exclaimed, whereupon my informant pulled a copy of the bill from her reticule, and laid it before me.

Had the station-master who issued the bills been present just then, he would have heard what I thought of him for thus needlessly aggravating the feelings of a quiet man, who asked nothing of his fellow-creatures but to be allowed to go on his way without notice. I did afterwards tell him something of the kind.

"I'm going down to Fixem's, to pay them for the figure," continued the young woman. "They may be proud to see the ladies' own maid from Acton Hall goin' to them, though it's not with my will, to give them money, and I wish you a good-morning, sir." And, with a sweeping curtsy, she was gone.

An hour or two afterwards, by the time I thought my late visitor was well out of the way, I went down Moon Street, intending, for the last time, to enter the hateful Fixem's, whose carelessness in either addressing that ill-starred figure imperfectly, or not addressing it at all, had caused the most of my annoyance, and just as I came in sight of the shop, I saw the "own maid" to the Miss Actons whisking out of it, carrying her head very high indeed.

Assuming an unconcerned and slightly stern demeanour, I went in, and was received by the shop-walking gentleman with intense deference, not unmingled, so it seemed to me, with a strong inclination to laugh.

In a few words I desired him to have Mrs. Tattleton informed of the loss of her frame—by this time I could scarcely bring myself to name it—and to take her instructions as to replacing it. And then I retired with as much dignity as I could assume, resolving to discover the most out-of-the-way place possible to which I could retreat. I had done with Hazeldene; my lease was just out, and on any terms, unless those Tattletons left it, I would.

Why could people not let me alone? It was all I asked of them, and to obtain this small boon I was likely to be made a fugitive and a vagabond.

Life, as Mrs. Brassey describes it, in some of the South Sea Islands might be bearable, but no one should know if I went there. People might have commissions to be executed even there.

Early next week the ball was to be held, but I would be out of the way long before that. I hate hotel life. One can never tell what disagreeable acquaintances one may meet with, but to go back to Hazel-dene, and encounter those four Tattleton women, and explain to them the mishaps of their wire frame!—never had the Major who owned them, in his most warlike mood, seemed half so terrible an enemy.

Of course I had done with the wire frame now, but I could not get over the notion that everyone knew how I had first lost the thing, and then had gone in vain to look for it. A man with a family to think of would have got over it all sooner, and I revert to my sensations, because, when the waiter came in with breakfast the next morning, and setting a hot cover-dish down on the table, said he had brought me "the two grilled legs of a goose," just for a moment I thought he did it to quiz me.

With my feet on the fender, and the day's papers to search for out-going steamers I was realising some sense of comfort, when I heard quick steps approaching the door of my private room—I never use the coffee-room—and as rapidly as if he had been shot from something, Harry Sandford came in.

"Hallo, old fellow, here you are! I was afraid you'd be gone, and here's Vincent Acton wanting to be introduced to you!" and a nice-looking young fellow came forward and offered me his hand. "The Squire being master of the hunt," continued Harry, "we feel answerable for the success of the ball, and we're beating up for volunteers for the decorations, and all sorts of things. Come along. Get your boots on; we've no time to lose!"

My feeble remonstrances were in vain: "I was of no use, knew nothing about decorations, never had anything to do with a ball." All the same I was hurried off, young Acton laughing heartily at Harry's impetuosity.

He pulled himself up half-way down stairs with, "Oh, I say, though, the hotel people say they are so full they can't give us a private room for luncheon. Will you let us have yours? The ladies are all with us, you see—"

"And you'll lunch with us, of course?" put in young Acton.

Was I never to be let alone? Once again I felt myself trapped and powerless. Ladies, indeed! And positively the very ladies who knew all about the wire frame—had got it, in fact, pared down to their own dimensions, and had seen the advertisements desiring it to be brought to me. Once in the Sandwich Islands I should be able to forget all about it, but just now it was intolerable.

"Miss Moore, Miss Acton, Miss Mabel Acton, Miss Jessie Acton," I was presented to each in form, as they were to be found among piled-up ball-seats, mounds of evergreens, and small stacks of shining armoury brought from the barracks to aid in the decorations. Over these latter, soldiers were keeping guard, and several young officers, who had come to help, were going about making themselves agreeable, if not very useful.

Harry made no secret of it, at least with me, about Miss Mabel, actually presenting me to her as her future cousin. A very pretty creature was Miss Mabel, for, little as I know about girls, I can appreciate a bright, beaming face, with soft blue eyes and sunny hair framing the delicate features that a flitting blush seems so well to become. The sisters were curiously alike, and I could believe what their maid had informed me—that "what fitted the one would not go far wrong on the other," so much were they the same size, but Mabel was the prettiest.

Whether from good taste or from being so busy, I cannot say, but none of them ever in the slightest way alluded to that odious frame, and I could only hope that the fact of its having gone to them from vulgar Fitem's might in no way injure the future appearance of such very attractive girls.

And their aunt—only no one called her aunt; it was Cicely here, and Cicely there, and nothing seemed right unless she said it was.

I must be excused if just this once I, a man whose desire it has been to own to nothing of sentiment or feeling, and who has striven to persuade himself that he "cares for nobody and nobody cares for him"—if I this once quote poetry, and describe Cicely Moore as "a perfect woman, nobly planned, to warn, to comfort, and command."

Her manner of gentle firmness, her opinions given with such soft decision, her intuitive knowledge of the best way to do everything, and the unassuming manner in



which she took the lead in all the arrangements, and settled what other people could not make up their minds about—why, a tenth part of it would have turned the heads of all the Tattletons together.

From my being told off to be Miss Moore's assistant, I saw more of all this than I should otherwise have done; and though I had no intention of going to the ball, I felt it would be almost worth while to do so to be in her company again. In person she was taller than her nieces, with a good figure, as straight as a rush, and an absolutely faultless foot and ankle. It might be, too, that she was scarcely as pretty as they, though the difference in years might have something to do with that, yet was she a fair and comely woman, with sweetness and intelligence in every glance of her hazel eyes and every curve of her finely-moulded mouth.

The luncheon in my sitting-room was a very merry affair. I had little anticipated any such party when, a few hours before, I sat silent and solitary over the "grilled legs of a goose."

Vincent Acton, who seemed host on the occasion, brought the young officers with him, and afterwards we all returned to another hour or two's work at the ball-room, which was beginning to show what its appearance would be when completed. Before we had been long there on this second occasion, young Acton came up to me, and invited me to accompany them home, and stay at Acton Hall until the ball came off, which would be four days hence. He seemed to take it for granted I was going to this ball, which it appeared to me I had become involved in without my own consent. They were to return home by the evening train, and nothing would satisfy either him or Harry but that I should go with them: all remonstrance on the ground of my having left home hastily, and being unprovided with proper changes of apparel, being met by the suggestion that my housekeeper could send a portmanteau down to the junction, and that I had better write a note to her in time for the outgoing mail.

Thus it came to pass that my study of the route to Honolulu was postponed, and the hours that I proposed devoting to *The Tourist's Guide* were spent in the midst of a merry family party assembled in a large old country house, with all the extra zest and mirth going on among them that is

apt to accompany the first wedding among the young people of a household.

Not until friendly—I might almost say intimate—relations had been established among us was the history of the wire-frame adverted to, and then it was treated with such genuine fun and good-natured raillery that the whole affair looked different, and the shrinking soreness I felt on the subject was allayed.

The Squire and Mrs. Acton, who were kindness itself, received me as Harry's relative, and made much of me accordingly. Once in the house, I must not leave it until after the ball, to which I must now go perforce. I had not been in a ballroom for twelve years, and it seemed to me that my whole life was suddenly becoming reversed.

On the morning of the great day we went up to Conway by the morning train, having engaged rooms at the hotel, and as I saw the Miss Actons' "own maid" flitting about in all the importance of her calling on an occasion like the present, and thought of the last time I had seen her in the same place, I almost doubted my own identity.

It was something to see Harry's face when Mabel came down dressed; it was absolutely radiant. And certainly she was a lovely little vision, all in some ethereal drapery, like the blue of the summer sky appearing through a filmy cloud. She had pearls on her neck and arms, and in her hair white heath that Harry had got for her from some London florist.

Jessie, who was making her debut, was all in white, and Miss Acton in the pink brocade I had heard of as pinned on that miserable wire figure.

The Squire and Mrs. Acton came up by a later train. He brought his deputy-lieutenant's uniform with him, and Mrs. Acton was quite the county lady, in velvet and diamonds.

But to me none looked as Miss Moore did, with her graceful figure and dignified yet unassuming deportment. Her rich robe was dove-coloured, with a silver sheen on it.

The braids of her bright chestnut hair were fastened by an opal star, and her necklace and bracelets were set with the same.

It was so long since I had danced that I had forgotten the "why, when, and where" of the art, and so I told Vincent Acton when, in his capacity of steward, he wanted to find partners for me.

"Will you dance with Cicely, then?"

he said; "she'll be sure to keep you all right;" and he led me over to her.

It happened that a set of quadrilles was next to be danced, and, some way or other, she helped me through them.

"You are not superstitious," I said to her, looking at the opals on her wrist; "some people would be afraid to wear those stones."

"They can bring me nothing but good," she said, "for they were left to me by a relation whose memory is venerated among us for her goodness;" and, slipping off a bracelet, she directed my attention to the deep shadows in one of the stones.

We were sitting in a rather retired place, slightly shut off from the crowd by the folds of some flags that hung there, and as I returned the bracelet to her and she held her wrist for me to fasten the clasp, who should pass by but two of the Miss Tattletons!

Their bows to me were of the slightest, and their looks expressed withering scorn.

I thought they must be angry about their wire frame, for, of course, it was nothing to them whose bracelet I was fastening.

I did not dance again, but often during the night I had opportunities for sitting beside Miss Moore, who seemed to me the nicest woman I had known since my own mother died, and I found myself speculating on how it could possibly be that she had been allowed to remain unmarried. In fact I forgot all about the route to the Sandwich Islands, and found myself continually wondering what Miss Moore thought of me, or whether she thought of me at all.

I had not expected to return to Acton Hall after the ball, but I was carried off among the rest. It would take them a day or two, they said, to talk it all over, and they wanted to hear my impressions.

Then a Sunday intervened, and I must stay over that day.

Monday morning's post brought me a letter which I here transcribe, merely remarking that on reading it I felt thankful that I had sent a notice to my landlord on the right day, as any return to Hazeldene was now, more than ever, out of the question.

The letter ran thus:

"MRS. TATTLETON presents her compliments to Mr. Hawkins, and begs to express her regret for having troubled him with the commission which had such an unfortunate ending. Unfortunate, at least, so far as those are concerned for whose benefit the required article had been designed, though probably the ladies who obtained

it had reason to congratulate themselves on its capture, as, owing to the hunt ball, the demand for similar articles was far in advance of the supply that was readily to be procured. Mrs. Tattleton is happy to say that her daughters' ingenuity and skill rendered them independent of the assistance thus strangely transferred from them to others. There is, however, a more serious matter on which Mrs. Tattleton feels it her duty to request from Mr. Hawkins an explicit declaration.

"For some time past his attention to her daughters, while gratifying to a mother's feelings, have yet been a source of anxiety owing to her being unable to distinguish clearly to which of her dear girls it was directed; and their peculiar unselfishness renders each unwilling to appropriate to herself that which in sisterly kindness she should, perhaps, yield to another. Had the dear Major lived, Mrs. Tattleton's maternal feelings might, perhaps, have rendered her more ambitious; but her orphan girls have only their mother to look to, and on their behalf she requests from Mr. Hawkins an avowal as to the object of his marked and unmistakable attention, which, of course, were the Major alive, he would long since have seen was due to his daughters, and have looked for accordingly."

I was standing at the library-window as I read this letter, and, just as I reached the end of it, Harry Sandford, passing along outside, happened to look in, paused a moment, and then turning, with a few of his rapid steps was beside me.

"What's wrong, old fellow?" he said. "Who's dead?"

"Nobody, that I know; but—just read this."

Harry took the letter, read it, flung himself into a large chair near, and burst into such uproarious laughter that I really thought he would bring the household about us.

"Don't make such a noise," I said; "you'll have them all in."

Whereupon he rolled his handkerchief in a ball, stuffed it into his mouth, and declared he'd choke, if I didn't let him laugh out.

"Do be sensible, Harry," I cried, "and tell me what I am to say to her."

"Sensible!" he gasped. "Do you mean to marry them—to marry them all?"

"Will you be rational, Harry, if you can? I'm not going to marry anybody."

"Aren't you, indeed! Don't be too sure. Then write and tell them to go to

Turkey, and get a bashaw to take them all off hand together. Seriously, is the old lady crazy?"

"Not unless she has become so lately."

"Did you, though—tell me, Jerry—did you make a simpleton of yourself with these people?"

"Seriously, I avoided them in every way I could, and as to making a simpleton of myself, though I believe I've been one all my life, I have not been one as regards them. I assure you I kept them off as well as I could."

"Well, if you have a clear conscience, we'll soon see how to settle her. Let me write for you—a copy, I mean;" and he drew a small writing-table to him, and presently handed me the following note, telling me to put in as much more pepper as I liked.

"Mr. Hawkins presents his compliments to Mrs. Tattleton, and in reply to the first part of her letter, has only to say that the figure which she requested him to bring to Hazeldene, being from its size not such as he could conveniently carry, and not being properly addressed, went astray without Mr. Hawkins being in any way answerable for its doing so. The second part of Mrs. Tattleton's letter is altogether unintelligible to Mr. Hawkins, as he is unconscious of having given her any cause for anxiety, and can in no way understand how he has occasioned any strain to be put upon the sisterly affection which Mrs. Tattleton describes as so peculiarly belonging to her daughters."

"There," said he as he finished, "that ought to cool their ardour. I've seen some queer things, but nothing so barefaced as this. Some of these people were at the ball, I think;" and I told him how two of them scowled at me as they passed, when I was fastening Miss Moore's bracelet.

"That's capital," said Harry; "that's what frightened them." Then changing to a tone of seriousness, he put his hand on my shoulder and asked me to tell him "why I lived alone instead of making some good woman happy."

"Good women are scarce," I replied, "and if I found one I mightn't be able to make her happy; besides, I have determined to keep myself free from all needless care and trouble, and when once you are entangled with other people, you never know what will befall you."

"Then, from the fear of encountering trouble, you shut yourself out from love and home?"

"From love, perhaps, but a single man can have a home."

"And what is it worth, if it be in a palace, without someone to share it—someone to think of you when you are away, to welcome your return, to receive and give you confidence, to soothe and elevate you by their love and trust?"

"No wonder you are eloquent on the subject, Harry, for Mabel may well inspire you; but you have seen enough, surely, of life to know what many women are."

"Including those at Hazeldene," he said, laughing. "But never mind the many; find one true heart, and hold to it."

"Such advice would have come better ten years ago; I shall soon be an old man."

"Old! You're just in your prime, and you've plenty of money. That lawsuit went all right, didn't it?"

"Yes; they established the will."

"See here now, Jerry. It's not often I can get you alone to speak to. I have fancied you are just a little struck with Cicely Moore. There's no better woman living."

"I don't think she would be complimented by your speaking of her to me."

"Well, I can't say about that, but I do know she's one of the best, truest, most unselfish women living. She was engaged when very young, and her lover died, and she has just lived for the good of other people ever since. Now that you are acquainted, if you could only win her, what a happy fellow you would be! Of course, it's different with me and my little Mabel; but if you could get Cicely——"

I was just saying I did not want anyone, when Mabel appeared in her riding-dress, and told Harry the horses were at the door.

In February, Harry was married. The ground was covered with crisp frozen snow, and every branch and twig glittered like frosted silver in the rays of a wintry sun. It was a large wedding, and it was succeeded in the evening by a dance, to which the neighbouring gentry came in great force.

During the winter I had often been at Acton Hall, having fixed myself for a time in the town of Conway.

Not once, since writing to Mrs. Tattleton, had I seen any of that family. Why she should have addressed me as she did, I never could understand, for she must have known, as well as I did, there was no justification for her doing so.

Harry Sandford never renewed the conversation about Miss Moore. Had he done so, I should have felt awkward about going to the Hall. In fact, it would probably have wholly prevented my doing so; but nothing occurred in any way to interfere with the easy and pleasant manner with which they all received me, owing, of course, to my relationship to Harry, who was so soon to be one of themselves.

It was the evening of the wedding, which had gone off cheerily, for there was not to be much separation in the matter, as Harry's regiment was likely to be in England for some years, having lately completed a long term of foreign service.

I was sitting beside Miss Moore, who again had on her opal ornaments, and I remarked to her that I had not seen her wear them since the night of the hunt-ball.

She seemed amused at my remarking this, and replied that she always reserved the opals for important occasions.

"They are curious stones," she said. "They never seem to me to be twice alike. But if their changing shadows do indeed foretell events, that must always be so."

"They would be valuable talismans if that were so," I replied.

"I don't know that. I would rather be ignorant of what the future is bringing until it comes. It is a pretty fancy, though," she continued. "But what nonsense! Though there does seem to be something in opals to give rise to it. Look at this central stone," turning her hand to me. "What a depth of shadow there is in it! And yet light seems to glance from behind the shadow. I am almost inclined to think that light and shade change places in opals, for I have often looked at the deep shade in this one, and I never remarked that latent light before."

"May I offer my interpretation of the mystic glow?" I said.

"Yes. What is it?"

"That it symbolises the light it is in your power to shed where mistaken views and lonely isolation have long cast dark shadows."

She looked quickly up at me, but her glance as quickly fell, and she grew suddenly pale.

"Miss Moore," I said—"Cicely let me call you, could you accept the devotion—the

deep reverential love of one so vastly your inferior as I am?"

I thought afterwards it was not a very graceful mode of proposing, but the words came without study or preparation straight from my heart. In a low tone she murmured:

"You take me very much by surprise. I had no idea of this."

"Let the new light in the gem be a true symbol," I said; "you could scarcely make sunshine in a shadier place than my life has long been, you can never be more valued—more truly loved."

In another minute Cicely was gone. The music of the Lancers was beginning, and the partner to whom she was engaged came to claim her.

I don't know how she felt, she looked pale and grave, but my whole being seemed one wild tumult of joy, for Cicely had not repulsed me—had not said no.

Not again that night had I a chance of speaking to her, but on the following day we walked up and down the laurel pathway, and told each other of our thoughts, and feelings, and aspirations, and I felt something of what it would be to have the companionship of a noble-minded woman.

I close this story in a different mood from that in which I began it. Not meaning to moralise, there is just one little remark I wish to make. On what small hinges our lives turn! But for Mrs. Tattleton's giving me that commission, I should, probably, never have known Cicely Moore. Harry Sandford would have gone on his way, and got married, without ever thinking of me, if we had not met at the hotel; I doubt if he even knew where I was living. And, if the wire frame had not gone astray, I should not have been there, but in my house at Hazeldene.

Trifles! Yet they have changed my whole life, and another life as well—that of Cicely.

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